

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 13, 2000.

Hon. WILLIAM F. GOODLING,
Chairman, Committee on Education and the
Workforce, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is to advise you that Representative Matthew G. Martinez's election to the Committee on Education and the Workforce has been automatically vacated pursuant to clause 5(b) of rule X effective today.

Sincerely,

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 13, 2000.

Hon. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is to advise you that Representative Matthew G. Martinez's election to the Committee on International Relations has been automatically vacated pursuant to clause 5(b) of rule X effective today.

Sincerely,

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the foregoing communications, the party affiliation of Representative MARTINEZ has been switched for informational voting record purposes and his committee memberships have been vacated.

Had the foregoing communication of July 27, 2000, from Representative MARTINEZ to the Clerk been laid before the House at that time, the party affiliation for voting informational purposes would have been changed or, as has been the case in the past, the process would have been timely noticed in writing to the chairman of the Democratic Caucus who, in turn, would notify the Speaker by letter pursuant to clause 5(b) of rule X.

HONORABLE MATTHEW MARTINEZ JOINS REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

(Mr. MARTINEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, on July 26, 2000, I participated in the

House Republican Conference as a Republican.

The next day I asked the Clerk of the House to change my party designation on his official records and database to Republican.

I have also notified the chairman of the Democratic Caucus of my resignation of the caucus and my desire to be a member of the Republican conference.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all records of the House as of July 26, 2000, reflect my voting status as a Republican.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ACT OF 2000

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Government Reform be discharged from the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4931) to provide for the training or orientation of individuals, during a Presidential transition, who the President intends to appoint to certain key positions, to provide for a study and report on improving the financial disclosure process for certain Presidential nominees, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I do not plan to object, but I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding to me. Mr. Speaker, the ranking member has been just inestimable in terms of all the help he has provided us on this and other pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4931, the Presidential Transition Act of 2000, represents a bipartisan effort to update the Presidential Transition Act of 1963. H.R. 4931 would allow transition funds to be used for a formal training and orientation process for incoming appointees to senior administration positions, including cabinet members.

On November 2, 1999, the House passed a bill with similar provisions, H.R. 3137, by a voice vote under suspension of the rules.

On June 8, 2000, Senator FRED THOMPSON from Tennessee introduced a companion bill, S. 2705, the Presidential Transition Act of 2000. The Senator added some well thought out provisions that call for study and proposals to improve the financial disclosure process for presidential nominees.

In addition, the changes made in the Senate bill would require the admin-

ister of the General Services Administration to develop a transition directory. This directory would be a compilation of Federal publications supplementary material that would provide a new presidential appointees with a manual of information about the organization, statutory and administrative authorities, functions and duties of each department and agency in the Executive Branch. H.R. 4931, which we are considering today, includes those Senate amendments.

Over the years, there have been many examples of missteps and outright mistakes made by newly appointed officials in the White House. Those errors could have been avoided if the officials had more fully understood the scope of their responsibilities.

H.R. 3137 would set a time frame and authorize the funds for that necessary training and orientation.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill just as they supported its predecessor, H.R. 4931. It is an important step toward ensuring that a new administration, regardless of party affiliation, starts off on the right foot.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I want to rise and join with the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) in strong support of this legislation, H.R. 4931, and urge its adoption.

I want to commend the gentleman from California (Chairman HORN) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), ranking member, who have all focused on this bill and to be sure that it is brought before this House today and becomes law before a new administration occupies the White House.

The Presidential Transition Act would amend the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 to authorize the use of transition funds for the purpose of providing orientations for individuals that the President-elect plans to nominate to top White House positions, including cabinet positions.

The bill would probably affect 20 to maybe 40 political appointments in the White House. It is designed to give greater assurance that the orientation process would take place shortly after the incoming administration assumes office or preferably before they assume office.

This orientation will provide a smoother transition for a new administration, eliminating mistakes, and ensuring that the Federal Government will continue to function at a high level.

Our subcommittee heard testimony from distinguished witnesses who advocated the adoption of this new provision for orientation programs for incoming members of a new administration. Witnesses such as Elliot Richardson, former Attorney General to President Nixon; the Honorable Lee White,

the former Assistant Counsel to President Kennedy and counsel to President Johnson, shared the unique perspective that they have regarding the critical nature of this transition period.

There is no question that whoever is elected as the next President of the United States must be ready and prepared to go to work on the morning of November 8. That period between November 8 and inauguration is, indeed, a very critical period of time, not only for the new administration, but for the country as a whole.

So I am pleased to join with the gentleman from California (Chairman HORN) today in urging that this bill be adopted. It is noncontroversial. It is bipartisan. We have introduced it today and move that it be adopted by unanimous consent.

Even though we passed the bill on the floor of this House, we have now incorporated changes suggested by our colleagues in the Senate. I urge that we adopt it today.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 4931

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Presidential Transition Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ACT OF 1963.

Section 3(a) of the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 (3 U.S.C. 102 note) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking "including—" and inserting "including the following:";

(2) in each of paragraphs (1) through (6) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(8)(A)(i) Notwithstanding subsection (b), payment of expenses during the transition for briefings, workshops, or other activities to acquaint key prospective Presidential appointees with the types of problems and challenges that most typically confront new political appointees when they make the transition from campaign and other prior activities to assuming the responsibility for governance after inauguration.

"(ii) Activities under this paragraph may include interchange between such appointees and individuals who—

"(I) held similar leadership roles in prior administrations;

"(II) are department or agency experts from the Office of Management and Budget or an Office of Inspector General of a department or agency; or

"(III) are relevant staff from the General Accounting Office.

"(iii) Activities under this paragraph may include training or orientation in records management to comply with section 2203 of title 44, United States Code, including training on the separation of Presidential records and personal records to comply with subsection (b) of that section.

"(iv) Activities under this paragraph may include training or orientation in human resources management and performance-based management.

"(B) Activities under this paragraph shall be conducted primarily for individuals the President-elect intends to nominate as department heads or appoint to key positions in the Executive Office of the President.

"(9)(A) Notwithstanding subsection (b), development of a transition directory by the Administrator of General Services Administration, in consultation with the Archivist of the United States (head of the National Archives and Records Administration) for activities conducted under paragraph (8).

"(B) The transition directory shall be a compilation of Federal publications and materials with supplementary materials developed by the Administrator that provides information on the officers, organization, and statutory and administrative authorities, functions, duties, responsibilities, and mission of each department and agency.

"(10)(A) Notwithstanding subsection (b), consultation by the Administrator with any candidate for President or Vice President to develop a systems architecture plan for the computer and communications systems of the candidate to coordinate a transition to Federal systems, if the candidate is elected.

"(B) Consultations under this paragraph shall be conducted at the discretion of the Administrator."

SEC. 3. REPORT ON IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROCESS FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Office of Government Ethics shall conduct a study and submit a report on improvements to the financial disclosure process for Presidential nominees required to file reports under section 101(b) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) to the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

(b) CONTENT OF REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The report under this section shall include recommendations and legislative proposals on—

(A) streamlining, standardizing, and coordinating the financial disclosure process and the requirements of financial disclosure reports under the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) for Presidential nominees;

(B) avoiding duplication of effort and reducing the burden of filing with respect to financial disclosure of information to the White House Office, the Office of Government Ethics, and the Senate; and

(C) any other relevant matter the Office of Government Ethics determines appropriate.

(2) LIMITATION RELATING TO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—The recommendations and proposals under this subsection shall not (if implemented) have the effect of lessening substantive compliance with any conflict of interest requirement.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on and to include extraneous material on the special order of the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) on the subject of the 150th anniversary of the State of California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RURAL HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, when I was back in South Dakota over the August recess, I traveled around the State visiting rural hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. I wanted to get a first-hand look at some of the challenges that are being faced by rural health care providers. I also learned about some of the successes that we have been having.

I represent the entire State of South Dakota. That is 66 counties and 77,000 square miles made up primarily of farmland and grassland. When the citizens of South Dakota need access to a health care provider, it is not uncommon for them to drive 100 miles just to make a regular appointment.

Distance really affects how people get health care in South Dakota. If one's elderly mother needs to see the doctor, one may need to take off work and make sure the kids are taken care of while one spends all day traveling back and forth only to spend 20 minutes with a physician. That is when the weather is good. When the weather is bad with the snow and the wind, that trip is just not possible. One's mother would have to make another appointment several days later and wait to get the medical care she needs.

□ 1645

But in times of tragedy or emergency, rural residents do not have that luxury. Take, for instance, the example of the farmer working in the field. Farm equipment accidents injure and kill rural residents every year. When the accident happens, the victims need medical attention and they need it quickly. If they can get the expert trauma care in their hometown clinic, there is a much better chance of survival. If they cannot get access to the appropriate professionals close by, they would have to drive several hours to get to a large medical center. Chances of a good outcome are much lower.